



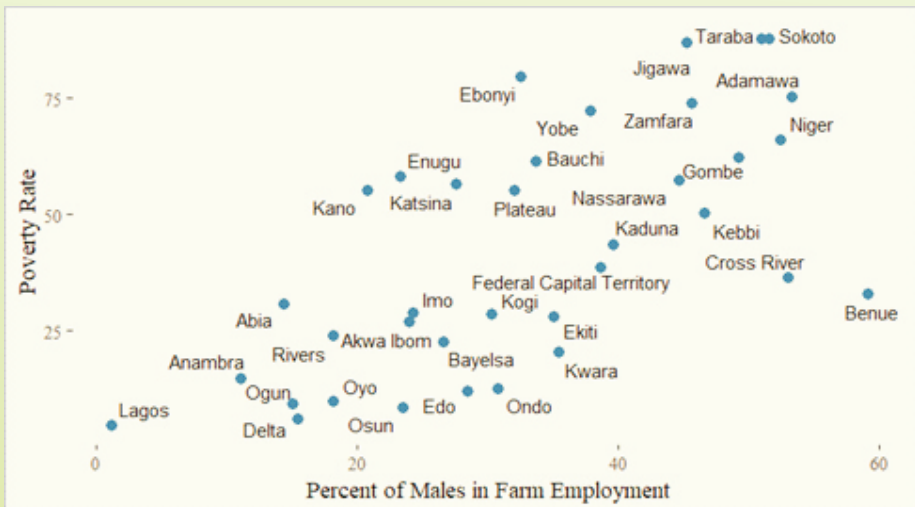
Pathways to  
Food Systems  
Transformation:  
**A CALL TO  
ACTION**



## PATHWAYS TO FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION: A CALL TO ACTION

Improving food systems is necessary for Nigeria to achieve progress, because poverty, hunger, malnutrition, diseases, unemployment, conflict, violence, and changing weather patterns are all linked to food systems. Improving food systems will require all stakeholders, including the governments at federal, state, and local levels, as well as stakeholders across multiple sectors, to carry out important actions to change Nigerian food systems.

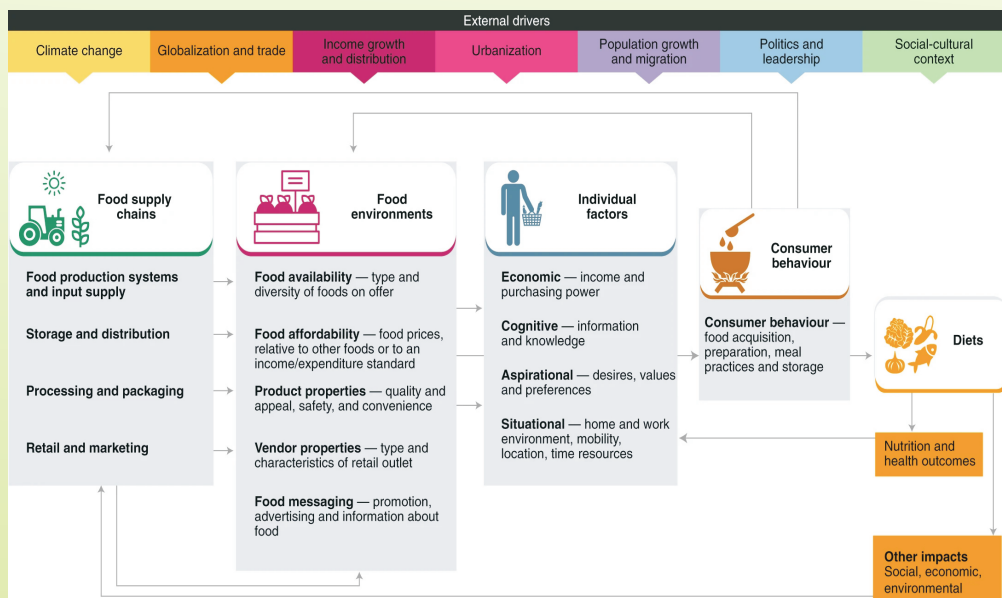
Presently, food systems in Nigeria mostly provide foods that are expensive, unsafe, and unhealthy. Thus, hunger and malnutrition have been increasing. In 2020, 58% of the population were experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity, 72% could not afford a diet that contained all essential nutrients, and 91% could not afford healthy diets that meet all food consumption recommendations. The rising hunger is affecting health, nutrition, education, and wellbeing, specifically for women and children. In fact, nearly 80% of children less than 5 years old in Nigeria were malnourished in one form or another in 2018.





As indicated in the graph, states with high employment in agriculture also have high poverty rates. Yet, there is no automatic or permanent relationship between agriculture and poverty. The present high rates of poverty in states with large agricultural sector and high employment in agriculture are due to failures and inefficiencies in the entire national food system. The food system encompasses all actors, activities, and processes involved in getting food to people's plates, including agriculture, processing, storage, marketing, affordability, among other components.

Low yields caused by poor farming practices and limited access to fertile soils, improved seeds, water, and capital; as well as limited storage and processing facilities and market access; limit farmers' output and their subsequent incomes. These and other institutional factors also limit opportunities for food processing and the use of local agricultural products in manufacturing. The challenges overall limit the amount, quality, diversity, and safety of foods in retail markets and reduce the affordability of and accessibility to healthy diets.



Source: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-020-0077-y>



Well-functioning food systems will provide higher incomes for smallholder farmers and small/medium scale food enterprises, empower women, increase youths' employment, and increase the amount of money circulating in the economy. Such food systems will reduce prices of nutritious foods, make nutritious foods available and accessible all year-round, and provide safe food so that Nigerians are adequately fed and healthy. Well-functioning food systems will also safeguard the natural environment so that future generations are able to get enough nutritious foods to eat. Moreover, if there are stresses, shocks, or conflicts, well-functioning food systems will ensure that affected and vulnerable Nigerians will be able to access food systems-related livelihood opportunities.

To ensure that the food system in Nigeria becomes well-functioning, more than 4,000 participants attended more than 40 national food system dialogues and reached consensus on key actions that are needed. These actions are classified into six clusters:

- Improve food security and nutrition by disseminating necessary knowledge and building required skills among all food system actors, including consumers.
- Increase access to factors necessary for food production (e.g., land, water, quality seeds, and labour) to ensure that food production is consistent, sufficient, safe, and sustainable.
- Improve food aggregation, storage, processing, and market access to increase incomes and reduce poverty.
- Facilitate consumption of adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, and healthy foods by increasing physical and financial access to such foods for all households.
- Improve food-related policies and standards as well as promote reconciliation and peace building and coordinate food systems actions across different sectors and actors.
- Conduct research and make inventions that will increase the continuous availability and accessibility of nutritious foods, while engaging extension services to scale-up innovations and research findings.





## Goals of National Food Systems Transformation

### By 2030:

- Reduce poverty
- Reduce unemployment, especially among youths
- Reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition
- Reduce food imports and promote sustainable food trade
- Increase Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index score
- Increase Environmental Performance Index score

### Priority Actions for Federal Government

Sector	Priority Actions
Agriculture	Develop/standardize food production guidelines for various weather conditions and soil properties, and food storage and distribution messages
	Develop quantitative food-based dietary guidelines
	Support development/standardization of food safety and nutrition education messages
	Increase investments to develop and scale-up resilient crop varieties and livestock breeds and increase biofortification
	Establish food reserve services, functional commodity markets, and marketing boards
Aviation	Public-private partnerships to establish safe grazing reserves for pastoralists
	Build technical capacity and skills of state and LGA level actors
Defence	Daily collect and disseminate seasonal information about weather patterns through the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet)
Education	Improve physical security of lives and property, including security of farmlands, forests, and transport systems
Environment	Integrate nutrition and food systems education into curricula at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels
	Liaise with agriculture sector to ensure sustainable use of natural resources
	Restore/maintain ecosystems, ecological processes and preserve biodiversity



Finance, Budget, and National Planning	Develop and nationally use finance and insurance services for small-scale producers/processors, prioritizing women producers/processors and youths Establish a Support Centre, including a National Food Systems Dashboard, to provide technical assistance and coordination for food systems action
Health	Develop nutrient profiling system to guide food labelling, nutrition/health claims, and marketing Support the development of quantitative food-based dietary guidelines Develop/standardize food safety and nutrition education messages Recruit, train, deploy, and retain permanent cadre of market level food and fortification standards' regulators
Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development	Expand/improve social protection programmes to provide healthy, safe, sustainable diets to poor communities and in humanitarian emergencies Promote use of traditional/local vegetables for preparation of meals for schools, hospitals, military, and other public institutions Support food systems-related technical/vocational training and business grant programmes for vulnerable women and youths
Information; Communication	Expand food systems and nutrition education through games, apps, infographics, social media, and other channels
Science and Technology	Fabricate improved/affordable farm, processing, and packaging machinery Increase research investments to develop new healthy food products and increase the number of fortified food products
Industry, Trade, and Investment	Promote use of biofortified commodities as industrial raw materials Improve performance, delivery, regulation, and coordination of large-, medium-, and small-scale food fortification programmes Establish food safety standards for agricultural production, food processing, storage, distribution, marketing, and food service outlets Develop/standardize food processing guidelines, including fortification and quality control/quality assurance guidelines Legislation to discourage production, advertisement, and marketing of unhealthy foods Recruit, train, use, and retain permanent cadre of factory-level food and fortification standards' regulators
Transportation	Scale up rail transportation and the availability of cargo and cold chain storage coaches
Water Resources	Facilitate adequate, safe, sustainable access to water for food system actors
Women Affairs	Liaise with other sectors to ensure all food systems actions empower women



## Priority Actions for State Government

Sector	Priority Actions
Agriculture	Conduct capacity audit on production farm equipment, extension agents, input suppliers, irrigation facilities, storage facilities
	Collect and widely disseminate seasonal information about soil properties and other production variables
	Recruit, train, deploy, and retain permanent cadre of extension agents
	Increase opportunities for agriculture tertiary students to gain on-field experiences
	Reform the land tenure system for easy land access for youths and women
	Data collection and feedback of data to National Support Centre for coordinating food systems actions
	Support the dissemination and adoption of food safety standards throughout the entire food system
Commerce, Trade, and Investment	Support food systems-related technical/vocational training and business grant programmes for vulnerable women and youths
	Create food production and processing settlements and facilitate smallholder farmer access as well as youths' access
	Establish public-private partnerships to equip food production and processing settlements and provide extension and other related services
	Establish public private partnerships to strengthen supply chains for agricultural inputs, including quality seeds
	Increase storage and processing facilities through private-public partnerships
Health	Public-private partnerships to upgrade local market infrastructure to include cold rooms for fresh foods and other perishables
	Integrate food-based dietary guidelines and standardized nutrition education messages into service delivery at all levels
	Monitor/enforce compliance with food safety and nutrition standards in restaurants and other food service outlets, as well as in schools, hospitals, workplaces, and other institutions
Information	Make information about food production practices for various weather patterns and soil properties widely available
	Develop radio programmes to disseminate food systems-related information, including food safety and nutrition messages



## Priority Actions for Local Government Area (LGA) Authority

Department	Priority Actions
Agriculture	Scale-up dissemination of standard production, processing, food safety, and nutrition education messages
	Increase organization of farmers into commodity groups/cooperatives for easy access to services
	Facilitate access of smallholder farmers, women, and youths to agricultural inputs, technical assistance, financing, insurance, and services provided by the state and federal governments
	Promote cultivation of improved crop varieties as well as bio-fortified crops
	Promote rearing of improved animal and aquaculture breeds
	Promote household food production and animal husbandry, using improved varieties, for the household's own consumption
	Establish/scale-up home processing and preservation methods to minimize food waste and build-up household food stocks
	Create physical spaces and schedules for farmers, especially youths and women, to sell products
Community	Ensure that all localities have a market where fresh fruits and vegetables are traded
	Establish methods for community members to alert government about signs of conflict, and build capacity for peace building and conflict resolution for all communities
Health; Environment	Recruit, train, deploy, and retain permanent cadre of street food vendors standards' regulators
	Monitor and enforce compliance with food safety standards in markets
	Establish routine community outreaches to disseminate standardized food safety and nutrition education messages





***Priority actions that should receive immediate attention in the next 12months.***

**Federal Government through NiMet and FMARD:** Regularly collect and disseminate (through radio and other platforms) information about weather patterns and soil properties and best practices for crops, livestock, aquaculture, and poultry production. Information should be disseminated in time to inform food production decisions for each rainy and dry season.

**State:** Establish farm settlements/estates made up of groups of smallholder producers, including women and youths, and use estates to increase input supply, machinery hiring, extension and other services, and market access. Farm settlement estates should include all basic amenities (including internet) to discourage rural to urban migration.

**Federal Government through LGAs:** Promote Operation Feed Yourself by helping households to access information and inputs that will encourage them to produce food around their houses to feed their families.